

VETERINARY DERMATOLOGY CENTER

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CONTROL OF FOOD STORAGE MITES

Storage mites are tiny (microscopic) creatures that are commonly found in grain bins and dry feed products (including dog and cat food). These mites are largely unnoticed and don't bite, but the products that they produce can be allergenic for some pets. Pets are exposed to these products through inhalation, absorption, and ingestion. One storage mite called *Tyrophagus putrescentiae* is particularly common, and moisture or high humidity encourages its growth. Allergy injections or allergen-specific immunotherapy may be helpful in reducing the symptoms of allergy due to these mites.

There are also steps that you can take to reduce potential exposure to these storage mites. Here are a few recommendations:

- Purchase no more than a 30-day supply of food and treats at a time (don't stockpile)
- Don't purchase old, outdated, or low-quality foods that usually have much particulate debris at the bottom of the bag
- Check food bags for tears or holes before purchasing
- Keep food and treats in a cool, dry place (don't store pet foods in garages, sheds, or basements)
- Keep dry foods in their original bags, and discard the bags after use
- If plastic storage bins are used wash them with hot water and dish detergent and dry them completely before they are refilled
- Consider dividing large bags of dry food and freezing them in one-week portions and keeping them frozen until use
- If it's appropriate for your pet consider feeding canned foods
- Wash food and water bowls daily with hot water and dish detergent
- Vacuum where pets eat several times per week

If you have any questions please ask Dr. Buerger or your veterinarian at your pet's next appointment.